Sakura no Sono

Yoshida Akimi

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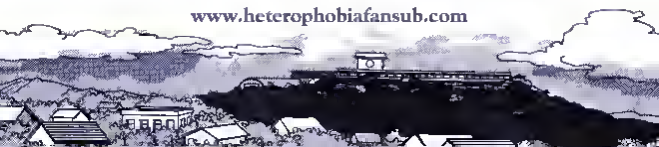
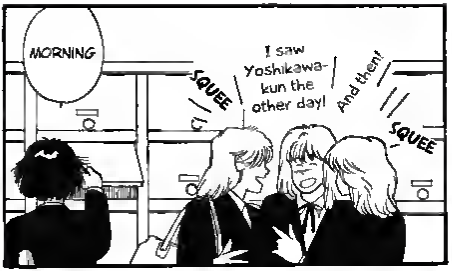
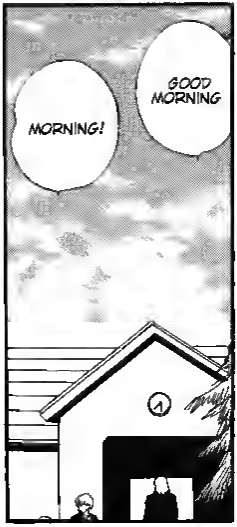


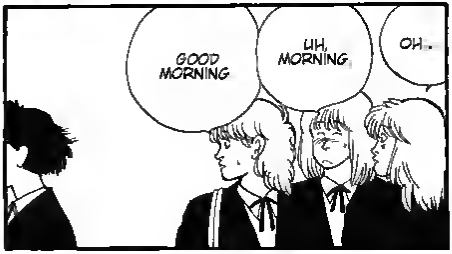
Red Flowers

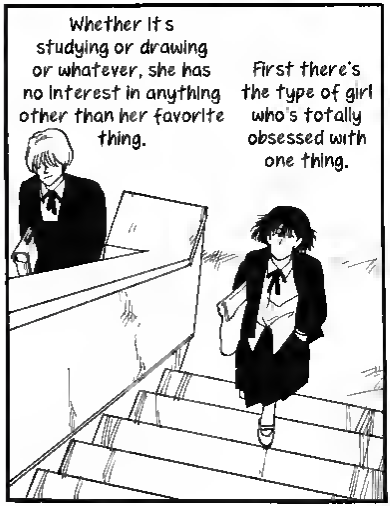
WHAT? I MEAN. COME ON.
WHY NOT?
WE JUST MET
NO.
SORRY.
REALLY?
TOO BAD
WHAT? BUT..
IT'S A GOOD-NIGHT KISS
I'M JUST NOT REALLY IN THE MOOD...
SURE ..
CAN I CALL YOU AGAIN?

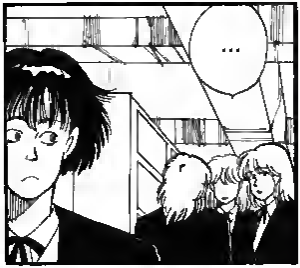
...
SEE YA.
COLLEGE GUYS ARE DUMB.
A GOOD-NIGHT KISS? GIMME A BREAK.


MORNING
SQUEE
I saw Yoshikawa-kun the other day!
And then!
SQUEE


GOOD MORNING
MORNING!


GOOD MORNING
UH, MORNING
OH.


Whether it's studying or drawing or whatever, she has no interest in anything other than her favorite thing.
First there's the type of girl who's totally obsessed with one thing.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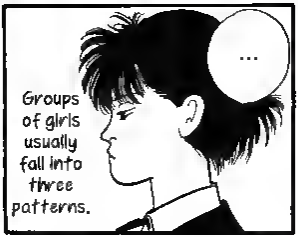
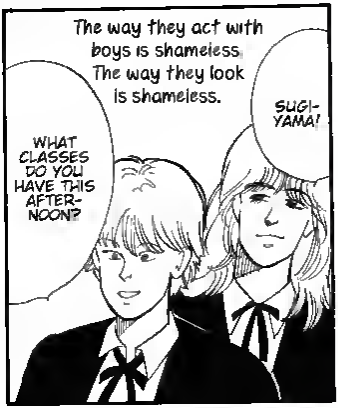

...
Groups of girls usually fall into three patterns.

She's into celebrities and boys, but is really just all talk.

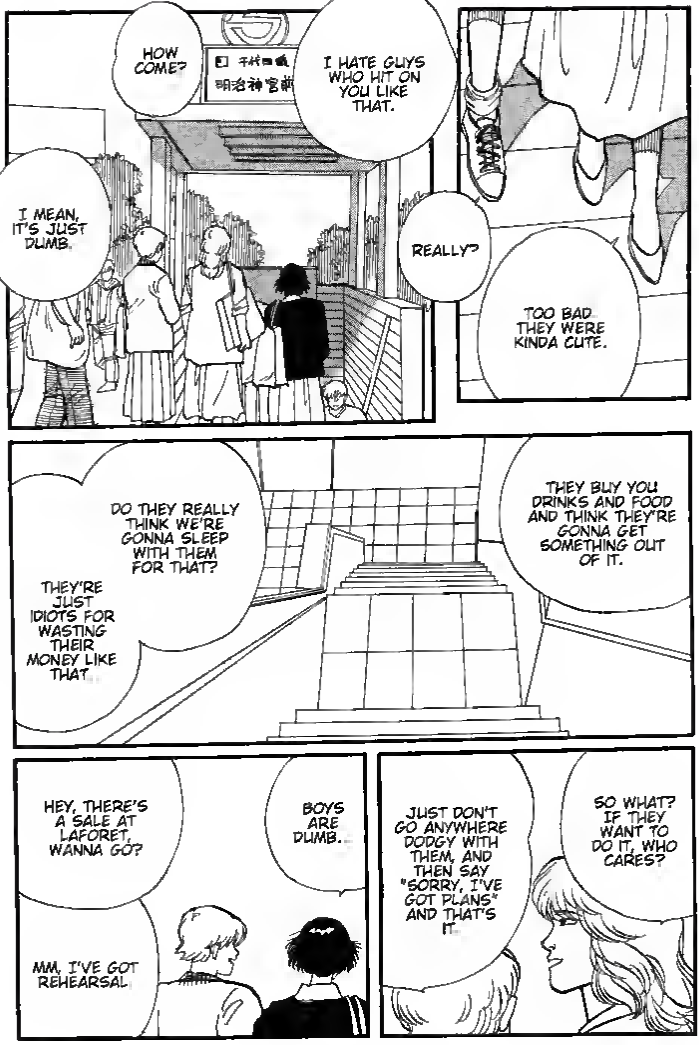
The most common type is the ordinary girl.



WE CAN CHANGE AT MY HOUSE
THEN LET'S CUT CLASS AND GO SHOPPING
NOPE
YOU LIKE THOSE CLASSES?
HEY, WHAT ABOUT SHUNICHI-KUN?
WHAT? YOU WENT OUT WITH HIM!?
HUH? BUT SHUN-CHAN AND I AREN'T REALLY DATING OR ANYTHING.
THAT'S TOTALLY A DATE.
IT WASN'T REALLY A DATE, THOUGH. JUST A MOVIE AND A DRIVE.
WAIT, KEIO UNIVERSITY? WHAT?
REALLY?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? YOU'RE TOTALLY DATING.
YOU REMEMBER WHEN WE WENT TO THAT PARTY AT THE AMERICAN SCHOOL IN HIROO? AND THERE WAS A GROUP OF COLLEGE GUYS WHO CAME, TOO, RIGHT?
POOR SHUN-CHAN

WHAT? BUT...
YOU'RE THE WORST!
ANYWAY, WHAT WAS HE LIKE?
SO WE MET UP THERE...
WELL, I WAS ALREADY IN AOYAMA TO BUY SHUN-CHAN'S BIRTHDAY PRESENT,
YOU BOUGHT A PRESENT FOR ANOTHER GUY BEFORE YOUR DATE?
...I DON'T THINK I CAN LIKE A GUY WHO WAITS IN LINE FOR 30 MINUTES JUST TO HAVE ICE CREAM...
LUCKY! I HAVEN'T BEEN YET... HOW WAS IT?
OH YOU WENT TO HAAGEN DAZS?
IT WAS JUST ICE CREAM.

BEFORE I STARTED DATING KIUCHI-KUN, I SAW THIS BOY FROM KEIO HIYOSHI HIGH SCHOOL A FEW TIMES AND...
THINKING ABOUT KEIO ALWAYS MAKES MY HEART ACHE, THOUGH.
WHAT!? I NEVER HEARD ABOUT THAT!
YOU'RE NO FUN!
WE WAITED 30 MINUTES. FOR THAT, IT HAD BETTER BE THE BEST ICE CREAM EVER.
WANT TO GO FOR A DRIVE WITH US?
OH, NOT REALLY...
NOT A DRIVE AGAIN
...
HEY, ARE YOU GIRLS WAITING FOR SOMEONE?
...
BUT MAYBE YOU COULD BUY US DRINKS...
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT A DRIVE...
SLURP

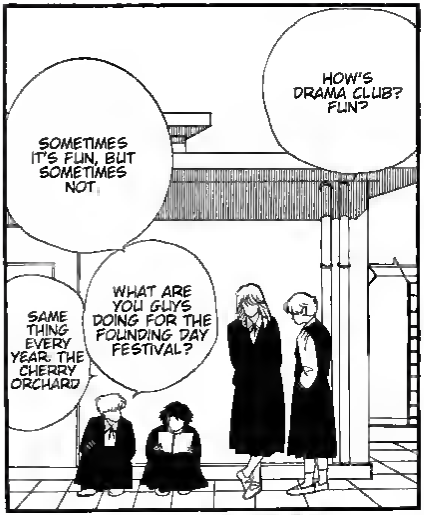

HOW COME?
I HATE GUYS WHO HIT ON YOU LIKE THAT.
I MEAN, IT'S JUST DUMB.
REALLY?
TOO BAD THEY WERE KINDA CUTE.
DO THEY REALLY THINK WE'RE GONNA SLEEP WITH THEM FOR THAT?
THEY BUY YOU DRINKS AND FOOD AND THINK THEY'RE GONNA GET SOMETHING OUT OF IT.
THEY'RE JUST IDIOTS FOR WASTING THEIR MONEY LIKE THAT.
HEY, THERE'S A SALE AT LAFORET. WANNA GO?
BOYS ARE DUMB.
MM, I'VE GOT REHEARSAL.
JUST DON'T GO ANYWHERE DODGY WITH THEM, AND THEN SAY "SORRY, I'VE GOT PLANS" AND THAT'S IT.
SO WHAT? IF THEY WANT TO DO IT, WHO CARES?

"If you only looked at me once Yasha You're going away leaving me behind..."

AHAHAHA...
SUGIYAMA-SAN, DON'T BE SHY...

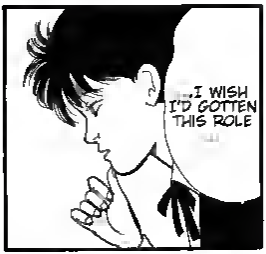
Being in the drama club at a girls school feels futile... but everyone has to join some club or other so I picked this one
SORRY, SHIMIZU-SAN, ONE MORE TIME...
ALL RIGHT, FROM THE THIRD LINE...

"In six days I'll be again in Paris Tomorrow we get into the express and off we go..."
"What's the use of crying?"


HOW'S DRAMA CLUB? FUN?
SOMETIMES IT'S FUN, BUT SOMETIMES NOT.
WHAT ARE YOU GUYS DOING FOR THE FOUNDING DAY FESTIVAL?
SAME THING EVERY YEAR. THE CHERRY ORCHARD

Epikhodov:

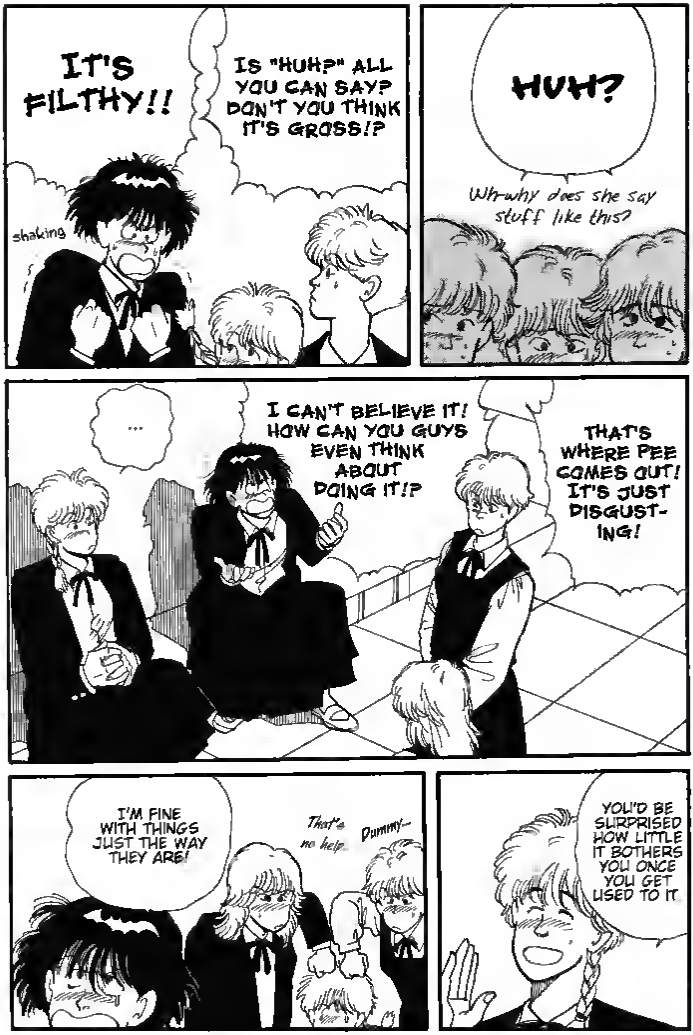
Some misfortune happens
to me every day.
But I don't complain,
I'm used to it,
and I can smile.



I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! IS SHUN-CHAN, YOU KNOW?
WE HAVEN'T.
REALLY? YOU'VE REALLY NEVER EVEN KISSED?
Why're you looking at me like that?
WE REALLY HAVEN'T.

Note: There's an old wives' tale that dark nipples are a sign that a girl sleeps around

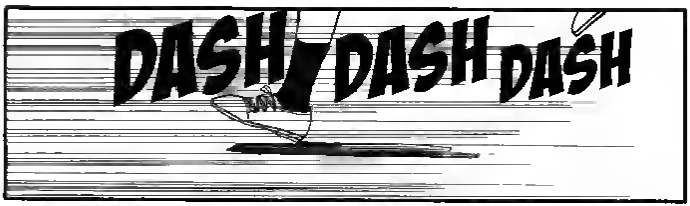
HOW COME IT'S NEVER HAPPENED?
YOU TWO HAVE BEEN DATING SINCE JUNIOR HIGH, THOUGH, RIGHT?
AHAHAHA, VERY FUNNY, AHAHAHA!
HOW'S INOUE-KUN DOING? AHAHAHAHA!
YOSHIKO-SAN, HAVE YOUR NIPPLES GOTTEN DARKER LATELY?
IS WHY IT EVER WOULD HAPPEN.
WHAT I'D LIKE TO KNOW
BUT GUYS DON'T EVEN WIPE WHEN THEY PEE!
I NEVER KNEW THIS UNTIL MY DAD TOLD ME,
HUH?

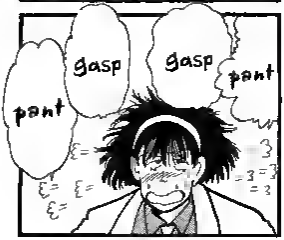

IT'S FILTHY!!
IS "HUH?" ALL YOU CAN SAY? DON'T YOU THINK IT'S GROSS!?
shaking
HUH?
Wh-why does she say stuff like this?
...
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! HOW CAN YOU GUYS EVEN THINK ABOUT DOING IT!?
THAT'S WHERE PEE COMES OUT! IT'S JUST DISGUST-ING!
I'M FINE WITH THINGS JUST THE WAY THEY ARE!
That's no help.
Dummy~
YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW LITTLE IT BOTHERS YOU ONCE YOU GET USED TO IT.

I shouldn't have said that.

I'm not going to give into any boy. I swear I won't let anyone wear me down.

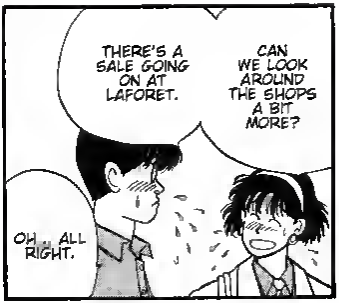
I know I can get through this.





HERE! HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
SORRY
YOU'RE LATE!
WOW, THIS IS PRETTY NICE, THANKS! I'LL WEAR IT TO SCHOOL.
OOH, A COTTON SHIRT.
Haven't you ever heard of an Oxford shirt...?
GO ON, OPEN IT.
I WONDER WHAT IT COULD BE?
OH, THANKS
AND YOU'RE GONNA WEAR IT UNDER A GAKURAN!?
IT'S A STATUS SYMBOL!
THAT'S A BROOKS BROTHERS SHIRT!
Uh...
UNDER YOUR GAKURAN?
WHAT!? TO SCHOOL!?
WHAT? WHY NOT?

WELL...
WHAT SHOULD WE DO ...?
NOW...
KEY WEST CLUB
They're at a pedestrian mall.
AND BEFORE THAT, TOO
He said the same thing last week..
I GUESS WE COULD GO TO THE PARK.
BUT IF YOU DON'T WANT TO..
HE'S REALLY NOT PULLING OFF THE CASUAL ACT.
HE THINKS HE'S BEING SO SMOOTH



This is all such a pain

I just want to have fun

I know the ordinary girls in our class hate us.

They're always talking about how we're so "shameless".

But so what? We just want to be left alone.

They're just jealous because they wish they could hang out with boys too.

THEN THEY SHOULD JUST DO WHATEVER THEY WANT, TOO.
DO THEY NOT LIKE THAT WE DO WHATEVER WE WANT?
YOU THINK SO? IF YOU ASK ME, THAT'S WHAT TAKES MORE GUTS
I GUESS THEY DON'T HAVE THE GUTS?
IT'S EASIER FOR THEM TO JUST BE GOOD GIRLS.
And Yoshiko just broke up with her boyfriend, but is already dating someone else
As for me...
Saya-chan cycles through boys like nobody's business
Narusawa has a boyfriend in college.

EXCUSE ME..
I wonder how he thinks of me.
I guess I've got Shun-chan.
Oh shit!
HUH?
YOU'RE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, AREN'T YOU?
SHOW US YOUR SCHOOL IDS.
...
CRYING WON'T HELP.
wah wah wah
sniff sniff sniff
AND WHAT SCHOOL DO YOU GO TO?
I NEED YOUR ADDRESSES AND PHONE NUMBERS.

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU GIRLS WERE SMOKING
wah
wah
WHY AREN'T YOU IN SCHOOL? IT'S TOO EARLY TO BE OUT, ISN'T IT?
YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS TO SLUTS LIKE YOU? YOU'LL GET SNATCHED UP BY THE YAKUZA AND SOLD INTO PROSTITUTION!
I DIDN'T SAY THAT.
OH, THERE SHE GOES AGAIN.
SO WOULD IT BE OK TO SMOKE IF WE WERE BOYS?
JEEZ
wah
WOW, SO WE'RE LIKE, JUVENILE DELINQUENTS

SO WHAT IF HE DID?
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE CALLED US SLUTS
BUT I CAN'T BELIEVE HE ACTUALLY SAID IT. HOW EMBARRASSING.
THAT JUST SHOWS A LACK OF IMAGINATION.
MY CRYING WOULD HAVE WORKED IF YOU'D JUST APOLOGIZED RIGHT AWAY.
...IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT FOR TRYING TO BE FUNNY.
I BET THEY NOTIFIED THE SCHOOL.
THIS IS REALLY GETTING ME DOWN. I BET THEY CALLED MY PARENTS.
HE WAS ALL UP ON HIS HIGH HORSE, JUST LIKE MY DAD.
BUT..

NORIKO!
NORIKO!
COME DOWN-STAIRS, DINNER'S READY.
YOUR DAD'S IN THE BATH.
NOPE.
YOU DON'T WANT ANY? AREN'T YOU GOING TO EAT?
I DON'T WANT ANY.
..
PAT PAT PAT PAT
FINE, BE THAT WAY.

I wonder why I don't really like my parents.
STUPID DAD REALLY HIT ME HARD.
OW.
Oh, the neighbor's cherry tree is blooming.
When did that happen?
They're my parents, so I do love them, but that's not enough to make me respect them.
It was the spring of fifth grade.
The late-blooming cherry blossoms were already falling.

I cried as I washed myself over and over in the bath.

like a red crayon

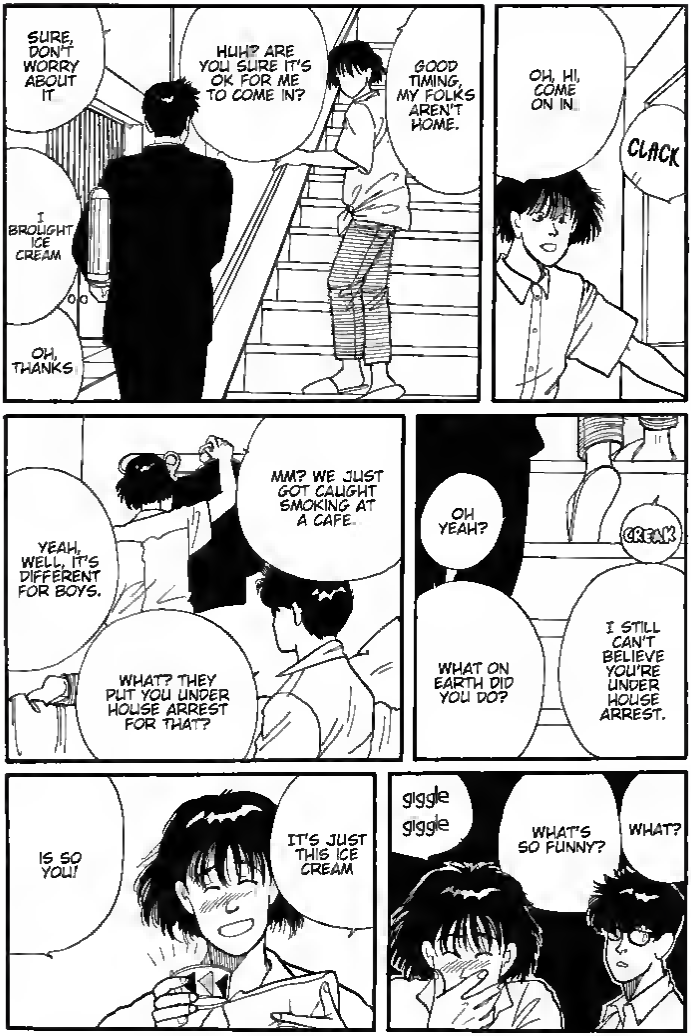
I still remember the bright red stain on my underwear,

Why did I feel so sad?

I cried until my hands and feet were cold

That night, I could barely swallow my sekihan

Note: Sekihan is a type of red beans and rice that is served on special occasions.
It used to be served when girls got their first period though that is not very common anymore.


SURE, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT
HUH? ARE YOU SURE IT'S OK FOR ME TO COME IN?
GOOD TIMING, MY FOLKS AREN'T HOME.
I BROUGHT ICE CREAM
OH, THANKS
OH, HI, COME ON IN
CLACK
MM? WE JUST GOT CAUGHT SMOKING AT A CAFE.
YEAH, WELL, IT'S DIFFERENT FOR BOYS.
WHAT? THEY PUT YOU UNDER HOUSE ARREST FOR THAT?
OH YEAH?
CREAK
I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE UNDER HOUSE ARREST.
WHAT ON EARTH DID YOU DO?
IT'S JUST THIS ICE CREAM
IS SO YOU!
giggle giggle
WHAT'S SO FUNNY?
WHAT?

HM?
YOU KNOW,
YOU SHOULD BE MORE CAREFUL.
IT'S DANGEROUS TO GO OUT AT NIGHT ALONE.
SO WHAT!?
THAT'S THEIR PROBLEM. GIRLS WANT TO STAY OUT LATE TOO SOMETIMES.
WHY?
'CAUSE SOME WEIRDO MIGHT DO SOME-THING TO YOU.
WHY...?
WELL, THAT MAY BE TRUE,
BUT THERE'S A LOT OF MEN WHO DON'T THINK OF ANYTHING BUT THEIR OWN DESIRES, SO YOU SHOULD JUST BE CAREFUL!
GIRLS WANT TO DO STUFF ALONE, TOO
IT'S NOT FAIR.

LISTEN...
IS THAT WHAT YOU THINK, TOO, SHUN-CHAN? YOU THINK GIRLS WHO ARE OUT LATE ARE SLUTS, SO WHO CARES WHAT HAPPENS TO THEM?
YOU THINK SO, DON'T YOU?
WHAT? JUST SAY IT.
THAT'S WHAT YOU REALLY THINK, ISN'T IT?
YOU DON'T REALIZE...
NEVER MIND.

He's handsome when he takes off his glasses.

NO!
MMPH!
STOP, SHUN-CHAN!

BUT I DON'T DO IT BECAUSE I DON'T WANT YOU TO HATE ME!
I'M WAY STRONGER THAN YOU.
I COULD DO IT ANY TIME IF I REALLY WANTED TO!
OH.
YOU'RE SO CONCEITED!
YOU THINK YOU CAN JUST STOMP ALL OVER A GUY'S FEELINGS!?
CRACK
SLAM
NEXT TIME YOU BUY THE ICE CREAM!

Dunyasha:

He's an unlucky man,
every day something happens
We tease him about it
They call him
"Two-and-twenty
troubles"...

PRO-PRO-PROSTITUTES!?
HUH!?
HUH?
ME, YOU DUMMY!
WH-WH-WHO!?
YIKES! NO WAY!
WHAAA!? ME!? ABORTION!? NO WAY! WHEN!?
Calm down! jeez...
THOSE ARE THE RUMORS.
NARUSAWA IS PREGNANT, AND YOU HAD AN ABORTION.
SAYA AND ME ARE PROSTI-TUTES.

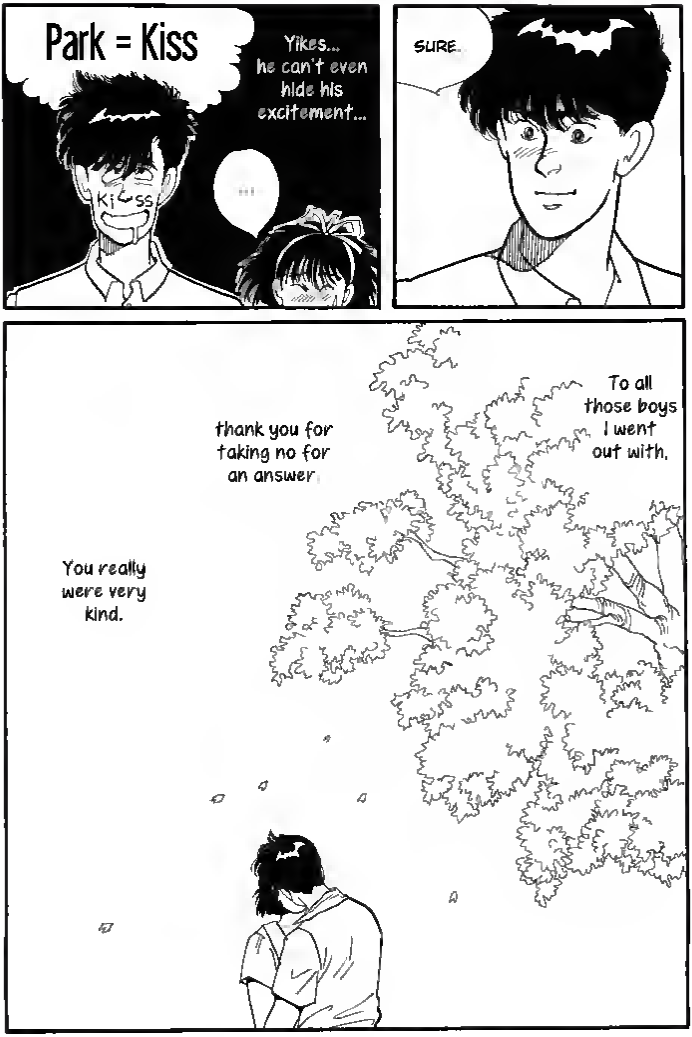
YEAH, BUT NOT EVERYONE BELIEVES THAT.
WHAAT!? B-BUT IT WAS MY TIME OF MONTH AND WE HAD A LONG-DISTANCE RACE...
YOU SAT OUT GYM LAST WEEK, REMEMBER?
YEAH, BUT IT'S NOT HARD TO FIGURE OUT WHO'S BEHIND THE RUMORS
UGH, THIS REALLY PISSES ME OFF.
Yowwww...
NO DOUBT. I TOTALLY BET THEY WOULD MAYBE NAKAHARA TAMIKO, TOO...
SAKATA FROM CLASS C, AND PROBABLY IWASE.
Don't be ridiculous. I'm still a virgin!

DO WE REALLY STAND OUT THAT MUCH?
THEY TOTALLY SPLIT US UP FOR THIRD YEAR, THOUGH...
THEY'RE TER-RIBLE.
HUH?
WHAT'S WRONG, SAYA?
DON'T LET THEM GET TO YOU...
I DON'T CARE WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT ME, BUT THAT REALLY HURTS.
I'VE BEEN WITH A LOT OF GUYS,
BUT I'D NEVER SELL MYSELF. I'VE NEVER TAKEN MONEY FOR ANYTHING.

YOU'D NEVER GO OUT WITH SOMEONE JUST FOR KICKS. I THINK THAT'S PRETTY AMAZING.
YOU FALL IN LOVE EASILY, BUT YOU WON'T EVEN HOLD HANDS WITH A BOY YOU DON'T REALLY LIKE.
YEAH.
I PISSED OFF SHUN-CHAN YESTERDAY.
COMPARED TO YOU, I'M A LOT MORE IRRESPONSIBLE.
I UNDERESTIMATED HIM... I THOUGHT I COULD RESIST ANY GUY, NO MATTER WHAT HE TRIED.
YEAH...
I THOUGHT I WAS DIFFERENT. BUT HE SAID I WAS CONCEITED.
BUT HE'S USUALLY SO EASY-GOING.
WHAT?

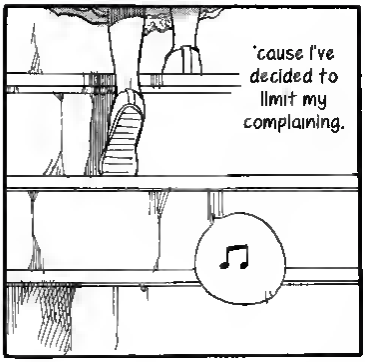
MAYBE WITHOUT MEANING TO, WE'VE BEEN PUTTING OUT A VIBE OF "I'M DIFFERENT THAN YOU"...
MAYBE THEY THOUGHT WE WERE SHOWING OFF BY HANGING OUT WITH BOYS.
THOSE RUMORS ARE TOO MUCH... BUT I THINK I KIND OF UNDERSTAND WHY THOSE GIRLS WOULD FEEL THEY HAD TO SAY THAT KIND OF STUFF...
YEAH, WELL, I THINK THEY TOOK IT TOO FAR.
YEAH, BUT THOSE RUMORS ARE TERRIBLE.
IF WE'RE GONNA BE HAPPY-GO-LUCKY, THEN WE CAN'T LET THIS SORT OF THING GET TO US, EITHER.
BUT...

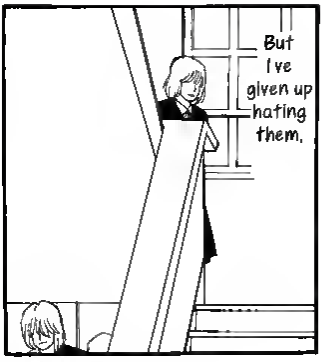
YEAH, IT TAKES GUTS TO REALLY BE HAPPY-GO-LUCKY.
WE HAVE TO BE STRONG.
YEAH, THERE'S A LOT OF TRIALS AND TRIBULA-TIONS...
Hahaha...
HEY, D'YOU WANT TO GO TO THE PARK?
I'LL BUY YOU ICE CREAM
HUH?
Contact lenses


Park = Kiss
Yikes... he can't even hide his excitement...
Kiss
...
SURE.
To all those boys I went out with,
thank you for taking no for an answer.
You really were very kind.

The warmth of
Shun-chan's lips
left a faint pink like
cherry blossoms
on my neck.

SEE YOU LATER!
SLAM
tweak
HEY, DID YOU WATCH THE BEST 10 LAST NIGHT?
MORNING!
MORNING
MORNING!
M-MOR-NING
We're still delinquents
and the ordinary girls still hate us
ignore
squee
squee





and that's enough to make me feel like life can be fun.

and a boy I like

After all, I've got great friends

I can't give up dawdling, though.